

Message Text

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22

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 ACDA-07 IO-13

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P R 270941Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9107

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

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TAGS: SOPN, MOPS, KS, KN, US

SUBJECT: ROK REACTIONS TO PANMUNJOM DEVELOPMENTS

REF: (A) STATE 206131 (DTG 109517Z AUG 76), (B) SEOUL 6700
(DTG 261001Z AUG 76)

BEGIN SUMMARY: AUGUST 27 PRESS COVERAGE OF DMZ-RELATED EVENTS
PICKED UP SLIGHTLY. COMMENT ON NEED FOR FIRM RESPONSE TO NORTH
AND CRITICISM OF NORTH'S SUGGESTION TO DIVIDE JSA IN TWO WERE
PARTICULARLY NOTICEABLE. SOME INDIRECT CRITICISM OF US ACTIONS
LINGERS. END SUMMARY.

1. ON AUGUST 27, MORNING PAPERS HANGUK ILBO AND CHOSON ILBO
AND ENGLISH-LANGUAGE KOREA TIMES AND KOREA HERALD CONTINUED
FRONT-PAGE TREATMENT OF DMZ-RELATED EVENTS. PHOTOS OF TREE-
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CUTTING OPERATION AND BRIEF STORIES OF REACTIONS IN U.S.,

JAPAN, USSR, AND PEKING ARE FEATURED.

2. EDITORIAL REACTION TO EVENTS IS SURPRISINGLY STRONG. BOTH KOREAN LANGUAGE PAPERS RAN EDITORIALS AND CHOSON ILBO FEATURED THREE-MAN DISCUSSION ON PAGE THREE. IN ITS EDITORIAL, HANGUK ILBO EMPHASIZED THAT NORTH KOREA (NK) HAS SO FAR TOTALLY IGNORED UN DEMAND FOR PUNISHMENT OF THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR INCIDENT AND CONCLUDES THAT NO INCOMPLETE SETTLEMENT OR SETTLEMENT REACHED OVER KOREANS' HEADS WILL BE ACCEPTABLE.

3. CHOSON ILBO'S EDITORIAL MERELY EMPHASIZED UNITY OF COMMON CITIZENS, ESPECIALLY SYMPATHY THEY EXPRESSED TOWARD ROK SOLDIERS, WHICH WAS DEMONSTRATED IN THIS ALERT. IN A ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION REPORTED PROMINENTLY ON PAGE THREE, HOWEVER, PROFESSOR YI KI-TAEK OF YONSEI UNIVERSITY IS QUOTED AS NOTING THAT THIS CASE SHOULD BE COMPARED TO SHOSEI MARU CASE, IN WHICH KIM IL-SONG TRIED TO LURE JAPAN INTO ASSUMING A "POLICY OF EQUIDISTANCE" BETWEEN NK AND ROK BY OFFERING REPARATIONS AFTER SHOOTING UP A FISHING BOAT. YI POINTS OUT THAT, IN THEIR DESIRE TO REALIZE DIRECT CONTACTS WITH US, NK HAS SUCCEEDED "TO A CERTAIN DEGREE" WITH THIS INCIDENT: "IT WAS, FRANKLY, REGRETTABLE THAT WE WERE EXCLUDED AND ISOLATED."

4. COLUMN OF COMMENT IN CHOSON ILBO BY REPORTER YI TO-YON POINTS OUT DANGERS UNDERLYING NK'S SUGGESTION TO SPLIT JSA AT MDL. HE LISTS PARALYSIS OF MAC, IMPOSSIBILITY OF GUARANTEEING SECURITY OF NEUTRAL NATIONS' SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND SOUTH-NORTH RED CROSS MEETINGS, AND POSSIBILITY OF KIDNAPPINGS AND ASSASSINATIONS AT NIGHT BY NK. HE SUGGESTS SIMPLE SOLUTION WOULD BE TO RETURN TO ORIGINAL, LIMITED NUMBER OF GUARDS ALLOWED IN JSA. HE GOES ON TO ATTACK IDEA (RUMORED HERE BY SOME FOREIGN REPORTERS) OF TURNING SUPERVISION OF JSA OVER TO ROK ARMY ON GROUNDS THAT MEETINGS BETWEEN TWO SIDES WOULD LIKELY TURN JSA FROM PLACE OF DIALOGUE TO "ARENA OF CONFRONTATION." HE CONCLUDES THAT THE DECISION OF "THOSE CONCERNED" IN WASHINGTON AND SEOUL WHO ARE NOW DEBATING THESE QUESTIONS IS ANXIOUSLY AWAITED.

5. SEVERAL PAPERS HAVE NOTED THAT AMB. SNEIDER HAS BEEN MEETING FONMIN PAK TONG-JIN EVERY DAY SINCE AUGUST 18, INCLUDING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FOUR MEETINGS ON AUGUST 26. PAPERS REPORT THEY ARE UNABLE TO LEARN FROM SOURCE IN FONOFF MORE THAN FACT THAT EVERYTHING FROM "QUESTIONS OF NATIONAL SECURITY TO DETAILED PROCEDURES" IS BEING DISCUSSED.

6. ALL AFTERNOON PAPERS HEADLINED STORIES ON EVENTS SURROUNDING MAC MEETING CALLED FOR TODAY (BUT NOW POSTPONED UNTIL SATURDAY). THREE OF FIVE MAJOR DAILIES CARRY EDITORIALS ON NK

SUGGESTION. HOWEVER, NONE OF THEM SEEQI AS STRONG IN TONE AS
COMMENTARY IN SIMILAR FEATURE ARTICLES CARRIED BY CHOSON ILBO
(MENTIONED PARAGRAPH FOUR) AND TONGA ILBO. SEMI-OFFICIAL
KYUNGHYAM SHINMUN TALKS OF "IMPECCABLE COOPERATION" BETWEEN
ROK AND U.S.
SNEIDER

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